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## Caprio's war chest prepared for battle

General Treasurer Frank T. Caprio recently took \$10,375 from his campaign account to pay for a Route 95 billboard that implores people to shop in Rhode Island, "where every day is a sales tax-free holiday on clothes."

Last winter, Caprio dipped into his own pocket to pay \$30,000 in towing fees for people who had their cars tagged and towed during a big snowstorm.

So looking ahead, I thought I might offer some suggestions for how Caprio, a Democrat thinking of running for governor in 2010, might use the \$866,000 now in his campaign fund.

I pointed out that with the state budget bleeding red ink, a blue

**EDWARD FITZPATRICK**



bought us E-ZPasses. Call them Frank-CPasses.

ribbon panel has recommended putting toll booths on Route 95 to help pay for roads and bridges. Frankly, Caprio could save us all a lot of time if he

I noted Governor Carcieri has blasted Senate President-elect M. Teresa Paiva Weed for giving her new chief of staff, Thomas R. Coderre, a salary of more than \$125,000 a year. If Caprio would pick up that tab, I'm sure the Senate would give him a proclamation suitable for framing.

Finally, I mentioned that Boston Red Sox catcher Jason Varitek is seeking a multi-year deal that might not prove palatable to general manager Theo Epstein. I suggested Caprio foot the bill for at least one year so the Sox can keep Tek behind home plate.

Caprio, who has a sense of humor and was captain of the Harvard baseball team, said, "Varitek — I'd be willing to participate in that" because "I think he's key to the pitching staff."

"You've got to understand," he said, "I have a nightly argument in my house. My wife roots for the Yankees, and I root for the Red Sox. She is an ardent Yankee fan to the point where she follows every pitch of every game. We have the Major League Baseball package, and we have to do the split screen."

I told Caprio that I assume he has amassed a war chest of \$866,520 because he's anticipating a rematch with his Republican opponent in the 2006 treasurer's race, Andrew M. Lyon III, whom Caprio trounced with 73 percent of the vote. "You have a good insight," he deadpanned.

Is Caprio going to run for governor in 2010? "I've been in office for two years, and having run every two years for state legislature, I saw up close how important it is to have the necessary resources to get your message out," he replied. "And we just saw that in the presidential campaign. The person who came up short — one of their major excuses is they were outspent. So no matter what I focus on next election, I plan on having the necessary resources to get my message out. But I have yet to make a decision on that front."

So he's considering running for governor, right? "Correct,"

Since January 2007, Caprio's campaign fund has paid \$2,500 a month for a full-time fundraiser, Amy Gabarra. "It's about having options and resources," he said.

Caprio, 42, of Providence, is a former corporate lawyer who previously served in the state Senate and House. His father is Providence Municipal Court Judge Frank Caprio.

When Caprio became Senate Finance Committee chairman in 2001, a Journal article observed that "the young lawyer pumped \$125,000, an unusually big sum of money for a legislative candidate, into his Senate campaign account" and withdrew the cash soon after a key reporting deadline. Caprio explained the money had shown potential opponents he was willing to commit money to the race.

"He not only has a degree in economics from Harvard University," the article said, "[Caprio] also has a keen appreciation for the power of money."